The Engagement Pas de Trois
Relationships Between Choreographers and Dancers and Their Potential Impact on Audience Engagement

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ABSTRACT

The largest challenge the dance field is facing is declining audiences (National Endowment of the Arts, 2012). Is it because choreographers do not consider audience's needs in their creation process? How does a choreographer translate their vision to the dancers? This study explores the relationship between choreographers and dancers as it relates to the audience's eventual experience of the piece, seeking to understand how choreographers approach audience engagement during the creation phases of their creative process. Data from Dance/USA's Engaging Dance Audiences study has been utilized to provide an overview of the current dance audiences. Other existing literature provides insight on the ways choreographers create and how dancers are involved in the process. This study examined the creative process of four choreographers and eight dancers through individual interviews during a residency program in Israel. Through this research, it was found that the choreographer/ dancer relationship is a critical part of how choreographers think about engaging the audience. Themes explored include: 1. Choreographers are reliant on their dancers to portray their vision and use rehearsals as a time to create an emotional reaction to the choreography;
2. Choreographers are more interested in inspiring their audience to feel a specific way from watching their piece rather than wishing for them to understand the reasons for the movement; 3. Understanding the reasons for the movement is the dancer's job. This research suggests that dancers, then, are pivotal to a choreographer's intentions to engaging audiences. These findings focus on audience engagement at a creation level, instead of an additional organized activity. This study is done to supplement the work already being done by dance audience engagement programing and the research being completed by Dance/USA. From these findings, dance companies and administrators can adjust their audience engagement approaches to ensure that both choreographer's intention for the audience and the dancers' experience are considered in audience engagement initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

There is a change in how people are choosing to participate in art. The arts sector is now moving toward creating events and programs suited to fit their audience's needs, changing the way the arts have traditionally been presented for audiences (Peterson and Rossman, 2008, p.307- 342). Programs are being developed that allow for audiences to have an individual experience based on their needs. The Cooper Hewitt Museum, for example, now gives visitors a digital pen that allows them to personalize their visit and create blueprints and wallpapers that will be emailed to them, while the Chopin Museum in Poland allows its visitors the option to choose between three knowledge settings; no knowledge, some knowledge, and very knowledgeable, to individualize their experience. Sleep No More in New York is an interactive theater experience that allows audiences to walk around and choose the storyline they wish to follow, essentially curating their own version of the production. These experiences are both educational and entertaining, giving audiences the opportunity to pick and choose what to engage in based on their needs and interests. Strong audience engagement increase the organization's reach, increase revenue, and fulfill the mission. Sleep No More was originally a limited run, however, due to demand it is now in its fifth season. Though tickets start at $105 per person, shows are still sold out.

The biggest problems dance companies are currently facing is the declining audiences. The National Endowment for the Art's 2012 audience engagement study, *How a Nation Engages with Art,* surveyed 35,735 U.S. adults on their arts participation within the past year. Of those surveyed 49% said that they had attended Visual or Performing Arts event, of the 49%, 37% stated that they had attended a live performance (National Endowment for the Arts, 2013). From the 37%, only 7% attended some type of dance performance, beating opera at 2%, and making dance performance the

second least attended performing art form (National Endowment for the Arts, 2013). An audience is the reason why performing arts companies exist. Without someone to watch the work, there is no reason to create.

Dance/USA, America's national dance service organization, is currently researching how programs created by dance companies can become more engaging to today's audiences (Brown and Novak-Leonard, 2011). Engaging Dance Audiences project aims to study dance companies that have had successful audience engaging programs in order to share the methods with other dance organizations across the United States. An engaged audience is critical for the success of the organization. The more an audience understands the mission, the more programs they will attend increasing their engagement level with the organization. By audiences engaged with the organization the more interested they will be to support the organization through donating time and money. A large support system of engaged audience members helps get the word out about the organization and increases the organization's credibility, which can gain more supporters therefore, fulfilling the mission and gaining revenue.

The majority of audience engagement activities dance companies provide start and stop at the performance. Because the first point of contact with a dance company is performance, the performance needs to be engaging in order to begin to build that relationship with the audience. I believe that in order to engage an audience, you must first engage those you are working with. Audience engagement starts at the beginning of the choreographic creative process. The relationships between the choreographer and dancer are important in creating a relationship with the audience. The dancer is used as a medium for the choreographer to explore an idea and communicate that idea to an audience. How a choreographer communicates and works with their dancers affect how the dancers translate that choreographer's vision. The dancers take all of the information from the choreographer and reframe it to find a personal connection. By finding a personal connection the dancers can be honest in their emotion and physical expression of the choreographer's vision. Honest portrayals of emotion allow the dancers to open themselves up to share the choreographer's vision to the audience.

In studying these relationships, I began at the start of a choreographic creative process. I choose to study four choreographer's processes based on their vision and what they intended on exploring. I interviewed three choreographers at the beginning, middle, and end (post performance) regarding their vision, how they chose their dancers, how they conduct rehearsals, the changes or clarification their vision went through, and if they think about the audience. The fourth choreographer was observed, as I was a part of the process. Interviews with the choreographer's dancers (except the fourth choreographer) were done throughout the process. In addition to interviews, two surveys were distributed to thirty choreographers at the beginning and end (post performance) of their choreographic creative process. From the interviews, observations, and survey results it was discovered that after the choreographer has inspiration, then they think about how to translate this feeling or idea into movement that conveys a specific emotion. They then choose dancers based on their ability to adequately convey this emotion through physicality. Dancers who understand their choreographer's vision and who have personally taken the time to relate the vision to themselves, know and understand what they have to communicate to the audience. Though I was only able to study the choreographer/ dancer relationship, I believe that this relationship is important in establishing a relationship with the audience.

The following literature review aims to define these relationships -- choreographer/ audience, choreographer/ dancer, dancer/ audience -- by establishing why choreographers create dance, a dancers' perception of their role in the creative process, as well as the benefits of collaboration within the choreographic creative process, and who makes up current dance audiences and how they engage with dance. The literature expresses that a more collaborative approach in the creative process is the most beneficial to choreographers and dancers. When a dance work is collaborative, the dancers create their own meaning and importance in the work, making it easier for them to communicate their messages to an audience. Utilizing a collaborative choreographic approach, the choreographer is not

making dance to serve their ego, but welcoming input and discussion from others to communicate messages based on shared human experiences.

The research and literature support the claim that audience engagement begins with the choreographer's relationship to their dancers. Examining the dancer/ choreographer relationship can enhance audience engagement programming. In order to have an engaged audience, all who take part (choreographer, dancer, and audience) in the choreographic creative process must feel satisfied. An engaged audience is essential for the growth and success of an organization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature is broken into five sections that aim to explain: (1) who dance is for; (2) what dancers do; (3) the role collaboration can play in the creative process between dancer and choreographer; (4) how the audience interacts with dance; and (5) who are current dance audiences. These sections are the order in which a choreographic creative process occurs. First, there is a reason to create, then a consideration of how to use dancers, then of how rehearsals are conducted, and finally of performing for an audience. Through examination of each individual part of the choreographic creative process (choreographer, dancer, and audience), needs and goals are defined and must be met in order for the relationships between the parties to occur.

Dance is created to be shared with an audience. A dancer is chosen for how best they translate the choreographer's intentions. A choreographic creative process that incorporates collaborative practices can establish a personal connection in their dancers, which positively affects the success of the dance piece. Audiences typically engage with dance after the work has been completed through viewing performances, pre and post show talks, and sometimes open rehearsals (Wolfbrown, 2011). These events are interesting to the current dance audience, because the majority have had dance experience (WolfBrown, 2011).

I believe that this cycle of the choreographic process is directly related to audience engagement. The cycle of the choreographer having a vision or reason for creation, the translating and clarifying of that vision to the dancers, the dancer's personal understanding of the material through physical and facial expression, the presentation of this work to an audience, the feedback, and revising the dance is the process that the choreographer must go through to reach their audience. The choreographers are the creators that work with their medium, dancers, to discern the best way for an

audience to understand the ideas being explored. Without understanding who their audience is, a choreographer will not know the best way to communicate their message.

All aspects of this literature review are intended to provide a better understanding of each part of this cycle and how they affect one another. In my original research, I was only able to study the choreographer- dancer relationship, the first part of the cycle, which, I believe, affects the way an audience perceives the dance, which in turn can affect audience engagement.

Dance is Created for People

Much of the literature about dance is one sided, because the majority of dance literature is written by dancers/choreographers and is therefore, positive in the benefits dance can provide for those involved and the audience community. The authors focus on the individual benefits of those involved in the dance making process and those affected by the outcome or performance of a dance. This focus on community outcome through the participation in the process or as an audience member challenges the technique-centered dance performance mindset. Therefore, it matters what the choreographer is communicating to their dancers and how the dancers are translating that into their movement. The dancers' translation of the choreographer's vision shapes the message of the piece, affecting the audience's understanding.

Sondra Fraleigh, a dancer and dance professor, in her book *Dance and the Lived Body* believes in the healing powers and the knowledge dance provides for an individual (1987). Fraleigh states that dance becomes an art once it is done for others, that it is not an egotistical display of power but a piece of art that reflects and lives in the existing culture (1987). Through participation in arts, the arts have been shown to strengthen communities, create cohesion within communities, and reduce social exclusion and isolation (Mowlah, Niblett, Blackburn, and Harris, 2014). Dance is a social art form, requiring people to dance with or people to dance for, without an audience the art form of dance does not exist. Dance is for the benefit of the community, and performance should be the celebration and exploration of everything that community shares and believes. The Urban Bush Women believe dance is way to celebrate and reach out to communities (George-Graves, 2010). They use dance to tell the stories of the disenfranchised and treat their performances as community service (George-Graves, 2010). Most important to their process is the understanding of dance as a social experiment between audience and dancer, that it is a give and take relationship for each entity (George-Graves, 2010).

Karen Barbour, New Zealand dance professional, believes that the most sustainable dance companies and choreographers are those that put the needs of their audience first (Barbour, 2008). By doing so they are creating an inviting and welcoming environment for their audiences to receive the dance. In Brooke Kid's thesis, *Revitalizing Communities Through Dance,* she proves that dance can be a tool for revitalizing and strengthening cultural identities in communities (1998). She looked at self-esteem, social interactions, and academic success in children that participated in her dance programs. All children noted improvement and growth in these areas as well as interest in talking to others who held different beliefs and ideals (Kidd, 1998).

The intrinsic values of dance go beyond benefiting individuals to help revitalize and instill pride in a community. Dance is more than putting on a show; it is connecting with a community (Karyn, 1999). A community that dances together grows strong together. Social health, personal health and wellbeing, economic health, and education are all positively affected through the arts (Mowlah, Niblett, Blackburn, and Harris, 2014). A dance performance is more than demonstrating technical abilities; dance performance is about telling stories, communicating feelings, or looking at something familiar from another point of view. What a choreographer tells a dancer is critical to the audience's understanding of the dance performance.

The Role of a Dancer

The methods behind choosing dancers relate to the choreographer's vision for their piece. Dancers can be selected on their expressiveness, technical abilities, or for a combination of both. The attributes that a dancer brings to the piece will impact what the audience will receive from the work.

At formal auditions, dancers are selected based on their execution of physical tasks: ballet technique, endurance, flexibility, phrase work, strength, and sometimes, if they pass the physical tasks, their creative choreographic skills. Chantale Lussier- Ley and Natalie Durand- Bush believe that the problem with this system in only training dancers for physicality a large part of processing and understanding movement is lost, because a dancer's role is to feel (2009, p. 199-217). In Roses-Thema's dissertation, *Reclaiming the Dancer: Embodied Perception in a Dance Performance*, she states that a dancer is "responsible for creating the choreographic text in the moment of performance" (2007). A dancer's role is to be the storyteller, to take the choreographic information from the choreographer and retell it each time they perform. Dancers need to create personal understanding of the physical movement they are asked to perform. Rehearsal is training for the dancer to understand how to tell the story and to embody this mindset.

Sondra Fraleigh writes that dances are not about the dancers as individuals but about larger concepts that try to understand the human condition (1987). As dancers, it is their duty to understand the movement they are being asked to perform, understanding meaning how to execute the task but also why. What purpose does this specific movement serve to communicate what the choreographer wants and how does the dancer personal feel while doing the movement? The dancer must allow their individuality to dissipate in order to create unity and cohesion with the other dancers. Once there is group cohesion then the piece can become about universal human experiences (Fraleigh, 1987).

A dancer creates his or her own individual meaning from the choreographer's prompts, but all dancers in the project must come together to create cohesion between their personal interpretations

and the group goal. The choreographers studied in the research were very specific in their need for their dancers to have an individual meaning to their movement. When all the dancers personally understood the piece, it was easier to get all of the dancers on the same page to achieve the goal. The group goal is the message the choreographer wants to send to the audience.

Processes of collaboration and the creative process

From conversations with dancers and being in more collaborative process verses a more traditional one, it seems that dancers are most fulfilled when their suggestions are explored and included in the piece. The four choreographers studied utilized different methods to make their process more collaborative. This section compares the traditional choreographic process with a more collaborative one.

Typically, in a traditional dance company, the creative process is begun by the choreographer. The choreographer then chooses the elements necessary to fulfill his or her vision; dancers, music, set, props, lighting, etc. Choreographers view dancers as tools and choose them based on their technical abilities. The choreographer emerges as the creative mastermind and sole owner of the dance (Barbour, 2008). No ownership of the dance is shared with the dancers, and the dancers are not to contribute their ideas to the choreographer's vision (Barbour, 2008).

However, there are different methods of creating that are focused more on the process and less on the aesthetic outcome. Victoria Marks choreographs dances that are focused on the dancers. Her piece "Mothers and Daughters" includes different generations of mothers and daughters that perform a dance that they have created together (Marks, 2014). Marks is conscious of allowing dialogue in her process to create a relationship between the participants. She focuses on the participant at an individual level and uses a creative process that is a mixture of games and exercises that evoke community engagement and outreach (Marks, 2014). This type of process creates she calls "Action Conversations," where she is reliant on the participant's stories to create movement which results in what she has termed "choreo- portraits" (Marks, 2014). In another piece, Marks worked with senior men to create a dance for video. Getting the men to commit to the project was the hard part, but once they went through a choreographic story telling exercise they signed on. Marks feels their willingness to participate was related to their desire for engagement with one another, saying, "I

believe I was creating an opportunity for these men to know one another, to satisfy a longing, perhaps, for intimacy and companionship. To be known to each other" (Marks, 2014, p. 3).

In a vein similar to Marks, choreographer David Dorfman created a piece entitled "Home" whose creation was reliant on the dancers that volunteered to participate. He brought together dance education majors and high school dance students. Each group of students brought different intentions and backgrounds with them, but working with each other for three months, over 100 hours, 3-4 times a week, their intentions gradually became about the piece and less about themselves (Parish, 2009). Dorfman held all of the dancers regardless of age to a high professional standard, which required dancers to clearly articulate their feelings and questions and to think critically about problems they encountered in the dance. Research demonstrates that the largest impact on the dancers was Dorfman himself; he was down to earth and had a genuine regard for the students (Parish, 2009). The environment Dorfman created was conducive for learning and growing, with no place for negativity. The choreographic process was highly reliant on individual and group improvisational games and exercises, like mirroring, an exercise between at least two people where one mimics the other's movement to give the illusion that one is looking into a mirror (Parish, 2009). Improvisation gives insight into not only the self but also others and helps promote cooperation and understanding between dancers (Parish, 2009).

Building an inviting environment is the responsibility of the choreographer. Without trust between dancers and choreographer, the dance will not be as compelling. A choreographer must genuinely care about the dancers, have strong values, and be knowledgeable in dance (Parish, 2009). By creating a safe environment for the creative process, a choreographer will be able to get dedication, investment, artistry, and different points of views that will take the initial vision to another plane. Barbour notes that when the environment is created and trust established there is a communicative, democratic dynamic. As dancers contribute to the dance they begin to establish a personal stake in the dance. There begins a shift in the power dynamic from the traditional

choreographic creative process to a process that considers dancers having co ownership and choreographer as a facilitator (Barbour, 2008).

Choreographers as facilitators means that choreographers are reliant on and welcoming of their dancer's opinions. By creating a workplace environment that is conducive to varying points of view, the initial choreographic inspiration will become clearer for choreographers working in this way. When dancers are providing their own movement and point of view they begin to develop a personal stake in the creation. Having a personal stake in the dance makes a dancer more invested in the outcome and reception of the piece by an audience.

Audience and the Creative Process

Stepping out of the relationship-building aspect of the choreographic creative process, next comes the actual goal, the performance. The role of the audience in the choreographic process is to receive and create meaning for themselves from the performance. In order for the audience to do this, questions like, "Who is the piece for? What type of space will it be performed in?" and, "How will the audience observe the dance?", should all be addressed by the choreographer. If a choreographer is truly interested in creating a connection with the audience and making certain their dancers adequately portrayed the message, then they should create a way to receive feedback from the audience.

In Nia- Amina Minor's study, "The Exchange: An Investigation of Engagement in Dance," she discusses her own creative process which includes constant consideration of the audience (2014). Audience engagement is defined as a combination of participation and observation; in order for the audience to be highly engaged, attention must be given to them throughout the choreographic creative process (Minor, 2014). Minor's creative process focuses on elements she believes make a good performance; artistic creation, presentation, active appreciation, creative and responsive as well as aesthetic and based in human experience (2014). She, like Barbour, views herself as a facilitator and relies on reflections and questions from her dancers (Minor, 2014). In rehearsals having a physical space free from outside distractions is important to the process, but what is more important is the choreographer's establishment of a safe and comfortable environment. When the dancers feel comfortable in the space it is easier for them to not only commit to the movement but to also assure the audience and welcome them into the performance (Minor, 2014).

The creative choreographic process is a circular and continually evolving living thing. Once a performance happens that is when the dance truly begins; audiences give the dance a new kind of energy that the studio cannot provide. The WolfBrown study *How Dance Audiences Engage,* surveyed current dance audiences on their pre-performance, at/during performance, and post-

performance engagement activities. Their findings concluded that 41% of audiences utilize the internet for background on the organization and show 39%of audiences read previews by professional writers,and 35% of audiences talked about the performance with others familiar with the company (WolfBrown, 2011). Engagement that occurred during the performance consisted mainly of hearing short introductions of each work from the stage. The rest of the at/during performance engagement options included: viewing videos of other work at a kiosk; playing an interactive role during the performance; taking photos/videos with phone when allowed; listening to live audio description of performance on a wireless headset; and, getting real-time commentary about the performance on a personal wireless device. Survey results showed that these options were "Never or not offered," to between 69% and 97% of respondents (WolfBrown, 2011). The highest post-performance engagement that did occur was discussing the performance with friends or family members on the way home, reported as an activity by 80% of survey respondents (WolfBrown, 2011). Other engagement activities receiving high response rates were: reading a review of the performance by a professional critic; seeking out more information on the artist or performances on your own; and, going back and reading or listening to previews or interviews about the performance (WolfBrown, 2011). From these responses, it is clear that the majority of audiences feel the most comfortable discussing the performance with people they know, researching on their own, and refining their understanding by the writings of professional critics. However, the results show that they would also like to personally engage with the artists in post-performance question and answer sessions and discuss the performance in small groups with a knowledgeable person. Are audiences afraid of forming their own opinions about the performance? Of the 14 choreographers surveyed, 64% wanted the audience to feel a specific emotion, whereas 21% just wanted them to feel something (Nitzotzot Creative Process. Survey. Created September 27, 2015).

A suggestion for engaging the audience within the creative process is with talkback question and answer sessions. Post- performance talkbacks are the most common post-performance audience engagement activity (WolfBrown, 2009). They allow conversation between audience and artists and

can provide some beneficial feedback and suggestions for choreography. By hosting a talkback, the choreographer can determine whether or not his/her message was received. Instead of just allowing the audience to ask questions, Liz Lerman has created a process of giving and receiving feedback to benefit the choreographer and those involved in the creative process. Lerman's Critical Response Feedback process includes artist and responders but also utilizes a facilitator to ensure time efficiency and neutrality in questions (Lerman and Borstel, 2003). The sessions are meant to be time efficient and productive. The biggest aspect of the process is to ensure neutrality and to establish a safe place of communication between artists and audience. By establishing a safe and neutral environment, audience members who are unsure if their opinions are correct, can use this discourse to further establish their own understanding instead of relying on expert's opinions. What is unique in the Critical Response Process is the suggestion for specific feedback from the choreographer. A choreographer must be open to the audience and pose questions they have been grappling with in their creative process, this creates an honest relationship and produces helpful direct feedback (Lerman and Borstel, 2003). A talkback is more than answering questions, it is a method for the choreographer to understand if they have achieved their goal and using the audience feedback to refine their work. It allows the audience to have a voice in what they view.

In order for the choreographic creative process to benefit all those involved -- choreographer, dancers, and audience -- it is important to start with a collaborative safe environment that is established by the choreographer. When the environment is collaborative it allows for dancers to express themselves and fully invest themselves into the dance. When dancers are committed to the dance the audience is able to get the most out of the performance.

Current Dance Audiences

Understanding who makes up an audience is the first step of establishing a relationship. Knowing the audience's interests and previous dance knowledge impacts the way a choreographer shapes the piece.

In the WolfBrown study, *Assessing the Intrinsic Impacts of a Live Performance*, researchers were able to measure the intrinsic impact of various live performances on audiences (Brown and Novak, 2008). The study defined audience engagement as the ability to provide captivation, intellectual stimulation, emotional resonance, spiritual value, aesthetic growth, social bonding, and satisfaction (Brown and Novak, 2008). However, from the research methodology of pre and post-performance surveys it was discovered that the occurrence of intrinsic impact is reliable on the audience's readiness- to- receive. Readiness- to- receive is established under a Relevance Index which was created to distinguish between audience members who lack knowledge of the performance or who do not normally attend live performances to those who do and may have seen the performers previously (Brown and Novak, 2008). In order for a live performance to be engaging and relevant to an audience member researchers need to determine the audience's readiness-to-receive. It was concluded that there was a high correlation between anticipation readiness and captivation; individuals that arrive excited and knowledgeable about the performance are most likely to lose themselves in the performance (Brown and Novak, 2008). Audience members who felt uncomfortable, either with the performance or location of seat, had lower readiness and impact scores.

Focusing on live dance performance, Dance/USA is conducting a nationwide study, currently in the third phase, which is focused on what dance companies are doing to engage audiences. The research is being done by WolfBrown with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. In the WolfBrown's Dance/USA *Engaging Dance Audiences* preliminary findings on current dance audiences it was discovered that audiences attend dance performances for the same intrinsic values

that were identified in *Assessing the Intrinsic Impacts of a Live Performance.* Nurturing, to see something that is iconic, for emotional or spiritual reasons, social bonding or bridging, but the main reason most audiences attend dance performances is for a creative stimulate (WolfBrown, 2011). The research to date has found that 59% of dance audiences are women who have had prior knowledge of dance and are categorized as social or serious dancers (WolfBrown, 2011). Many audience engagement strategies used by dance organizations include talkbacks or workshops events, but the most impactful were the behind the scene tours or sneak peek snips that audiences could view leading up to the performance (Brown and Novak, 2009). These engagement programs occur after the actual work is created or in the cleaning process. They only allow the audience to see the final product making it seem that the audience's only role is to view.

Perhaps largest endeavor of the Dance/USA *Engaging Dance Audience* study is creating a definition for audience engagement with dance audiences. Currently dance companies define engagement as outreach activities, but the study discovered three universal themes in each outreach event. Three themes in all grantee programs were identified as peer-to-peer meaning making, curatorial insight, and using technology to connect people to dance experiences (Brown and Novak-Leonard, 2011). Peer-to-peer meaning making is to rely on the meanings audiences create about the dance instead of the meanings created by critics. Curatorial insights are providing behind the scenes tours or offering pre- and post-performance talks. Using technology is somewhat less developed than the other two but is focused on providing live stream viewing options for live dance performances to audiences who are unable to attend. Regardless of the activity, dance audiences unanimously agree that engagement does not mean dancing with the dancers within a performance (Brown and Novak-Leonard, 2011). The definition is still being developed, but the findings are being shared with Dance/USA members to create a unified understanding of audience engagement for dance audiences.

Though dance companies have many different programs that aim to engage and deepen the relationship with audiences, choreographers also need to think about the type of engagement they want their work to inspire. Choreographers studied want the audience to create a meaning for

themselves about what the dance piece means to them. However, this peer- to- peer meaning making can only work if the dancers adequately portray the vision of the choreographer.

Summary

From this literature, we have learned that dance is created is to be shared with people. A dancer is more than a physical instrument; they are the medium for the message and are selected based on their emoting. A collaborative approach in the choreographic creative process can establish a personal connection in their dancers, which positively affects the success of the dance piece. Audiences typically engage with dance after the work has been completed through viewing performances, pre and post show talks, and sometimes open rehearsals. These events are interesting to the current dance audience, because the majority have had dance experience.

In The Engaging Dance Audiences study, a clear definition of what exactly dance audience engagement is is still being written. For now, it seems that programming activities, such as outreach programs, meet and greets, classes, and nontraditional performances are to be included in ways audiences engage with dance (WolfBrown, 2011). It also has not been studied yet whether a particular style of dance is more engaging over another. In the literature, most dance styles were modern based styles and modern based approaches to choreography. The viewpoint of the literature is dominated by the choreographer's point of view, with dancer commentaries to strengthen the choreographer's point. Hardly any research about dancer's role in the creative process or on dancer and audience relations has been conducted.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From my time in the Arts Administration Graduate Program at Drexel University there has been a focus on audience engagement. Programing, marketing, fundraising, and even advocacy courses have an audience-centered approach. It seems that in order to be relevant to people art is being repositioned to meet the needs of the audience. Audiences enjoy socializing, so theater companies put on plays in bars, parks, and other places where people go for fun. Marketing art isn't about the importance of the piece of artwork; it's about the feeling the audience will receive by viewing the artwork. Fundraising is more donor-centered, which encourages more participation in events and regular giving. Arts advocacy is all about the ways art can make life better, increase revenues, raise test scores, and support thriving communities. All of these changes are coming from a management direction, but I wanted to know if the artists creating work take into account the audiences that will see the work--specifically modern choreographers.

I come from the world of modern dance, which is a fascinating and ever changing world. Modern choreographers are interested in physical research; the feeling of falling, moving as if we have no bones, partnering without touching, how to explain concepts with bodies. However, one of the my many thoughts when creating work is how can I best communicate what I want to say. In rehearsals we spend so much time learning choreography, shaping it, reorganizing it, and improvising all so that the physicality can communicate the choreographer's vision. As a dancer, I take the cues and the explanations my choreographer gives to determine what emotion to feel and demonstrate on my face, but do other dancers? I wonder about the audience, what amount of thought from the choreographer goes into making sure the audience understands without the work being dumbed down and spoon-fed? Is the choreographer making the dance for themselves to serve their artistic goals or do they want to communicate something to the audience through this specific discipline? What are

the roles that dancers play in the communication of the choreographer's vision? How do the various relationships created in the choreographic creative process affect the performance and the audience's understanding of the piece?

By learning the answers to these questions, I hope to better educate audiences on viewing dance and to clear misconceptions and fears about not understanding modern contemporary dance.

METHODOLOGY

In November 2014, I auditioned and was accepted to participated in the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company's 5 or 10-month dance intensive study abroad program in Israel called the Dance Journey Program. My acceptance into this program led me to refine my research questions and create a methodology for my plans in studying the choreographic creative process and the role the audience plays in the process.

The program's primary focus is on modern contemporary dance training. While we do have daily ballet classes, the training is to prepare our body for the physicality of the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company's repertory. Participants of the program were required to create a piece of work for the final show. While there was no requirement that the genre had to be contemporary modern dance, the majority of the participants chose to work in their own movement style which can be categorized as contemporary modern. When referring to dance in this section of the thesis, then, know that it is being applied to a contemporary modern style of dance and no other form or genre of dance.

During my five months abroad participating in Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company's Dance Journey Program in Ga'aton, Israel I created cases studies that focused on 4 choreographers. I focused on their creative processes, what their purpose was in crafting dances, the role of dancers, and how much thought they placed on audience needs. Three choreographers were selected based on the number of dancers, movement style, personal approach to choreography, and willingness to take part in the study. The fourth choreographer was selected based on my role as dancer in the piece. I interviewed the three choreographers at the beginning, middle, and end of their process and journaled about my experience dancing in the 4th choreographer's piece. Nine interviews were conducted from the eight participating dancers; one dancer was interviewed twice because they were the only dancer

in the piece. Dancer interviews were conducted throughout the creative process and focused on their personal role in the creation, what the piece is about, what the audience will think of the piece, and the relationship between themselves and the choreographer. The dancer who was interviewed twice was interviewed at the beginning and end of the process and the interview was focused on if the dancer had a better relationship with their choreographer now than at the beginning. I also journaled interactions between dancers when discussing their piece and their choreographer.

In addition to the interviews and journaling, I also composed and distributed two surveys at the start of the process and after the show for all participants of the Dance Journey Program to answer. Out of the 36 participants in the Dance Journey Program 15 choreographers participated in the first survey and only 9 choreographers took the last one. Questions asked include: how many dancers are in your piece, why did you choose them, how often do you rehearse, what was your inspiration in creating this piece, what (if anything) do you want the audience to get from watching your piece, how many pieces have you choreographed previously, did your piece say what you wanted to say, did you enjoy working with your dancers, what was the biggest challenge, where technical elements (light, sound, props) important to the piece, and do you care about the audience's response to your piece. By asking these questions to the entire program I was able to see and understand the varying points of views and commonalities related to their thoughts on choreography, dance, and the audience. The responses collected from journal entries, survey responses, and interview transcriptions were then coded into qualitative data and then analyzed.

The Dance Journey Program is a five to ten-month study abroad program for dancers ages 18 and up. The curriculum consists of ballet, repertoire, Gaga technique[1], modern, and choreography classes. In addition to dance classes the program also includes cultural, Hebrew language, and history classes, as well as weekend volunteering in Ga'aton and group trips to various places in Israel.

[1] Gaga is a movement language practice developed by Ohad Naharin, artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company in Israel. Classes are improvisational and somatic based; dancers react to a series of images and situations described by the teacher. (Dance Consortium, 2012).

Students interact with Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company dancers and staff, outside choreographers, and community members. Students are accepted from all over the world, auditions for the program were in the United States and Europe but auditions are also submitted by video so as to insure anyone is able to audition.

LIMITATIONS

This is case study of the September 2015 Dance Journey Program; therefore, the findings from this study will pertain to this particular time and place with specific people. Each program term will have a different dynamic and different outcome, and thus my research results should not be a basis for understanding every term. Language was an issue for participants who spoke English as a second and even third language. In awareness of the varying English levels, the survey questions where simplistic. However, I believe that because the survey was in English many Dance Journey participants did not feel confident in answering which is why the number of responses was so low. Another limitation was the program's end date in close proximity to the final show, which caused a small window of time for the second survey to be completed.

The findings of this research are limited to contemporary modern dance. I believe there is a relationship between dancers and audience as well as the choreographer and audience, however I was only able to research the choreographer dancer relationship. Due to time and program schedule I was unable to develop a plan for researching the audience's relationship with the choreographer and the dancers. The audience that attended the Dance Journey shows were primarily Israeli who spoke English as a second language, and would have a difficult time properly communicating their view in English. I would have also been unable to provide a survey for them in Hebrew that would have properly conveyed what I wanted to ask.

HYPOTHESES

From the literature and Dance/USA findings I believed I would find that many choreographers are aware of the feeling they want their piece to convey, though I expected to find that other than that, they do not put much thought into the audience's experience of their work. Based on the literature regarding audience engagement and trends of participatory activities, I think that, if true, this could lead to a continued decline of audiences for dance. I believe there is a connection between a choreographer's vision, a dancer's understanding and execution of that vision, and an audience's engagement in a dance performance. If choreographers are not adequately communicating this to their dancers, then, how can we expect that audiences will understand the vision desired by the choreographer?

FINDINGS

Through my interviews, observations, experience, and surveys I have concluded that: (1) Choreographers are reliant on their dancers to make a piece's intent read to an audience; (2) Movement quality (footnote here to define what the term movement quality and the source definition you're using) is the most important choreographic element in the creative process; and, (3) The original inspiration, which is the basis for choreography, is not always what the choreographer wants the audience to understand in the final piece, though choreographers studied do all want audiences to experience something from viewing their work.

1. Choreographers rely on their dancers to convey the proper intention

In order for dancers to make their choreographer's intent read to an audience the choreographer needs committed dancers. Commitment for choreographers mean that their dancers are invested in the creation and success of the dance. The first survey revealed that 71% of choreographers choose their dancers based on the way they move and 50% of choreographers select based on their relationship with the dancer (Nitzotzot Creative Process Survey, 2015). Though having committed dancers is a huge part in creating a successful piece, only half of choreographers surveyed choose dancers based on relationships.

Establishing Commitment in Dancers

Through interviews with choreographers, I have discovered that though choreographers select their dancers based on their technical abilities, they also selected their dancers for the emotion they felt while watching their dancers move. Choreographer 3 selected her dancer based on her emotional connection to his movement, as did Choreographer 2. Initially, Choreographer 1 selected her dancers based on their movement; however, she had three dancers leave her piece and she replaced them with dancers that moved well and with whom she had a positive personal relationship. Choreographer 1

chose her dancers based on her relationship with them. Knowing that her piece was not going to be a traditional dance piece, she wanted to have an already established trust while going through the process.

Commitment is established during the creative process, and it is a gradual process. Choreographers understand that it is a vital part of the success of the piece and process. Choreographer 3 states that in order for her intent to come across to the audience the dancer needs to be personally invested. Choreographer 2 believes that committed dancers help to refine choreographic intent and that involving them more in the process makes them invested in the outcomes of the piece. Choreographer 2 also believes that the more committed a dancer is, the clearer the piece will be, and the easier the audience will understand its meaning.

Choreographer 1 knew that the piece she wanted to create would require trust and thoughtful contributions. This being her first time really choreographing work on her own, she doubted her ability to create cohesion and commitment out of total strangers, therefore, she chose two friends. Choreographer 4 also agrees believing that if a dancer has the right feeling, the intent will read to the audience.

Different ways choreographers create commitment

The choreographers studied utilize different techniques and exercises to facilitate commitment in dancers, such as: (a) journaling by both dancer and choreographer; (b) explaining their thought process and giving extensive background information; (c) group discussions; (d) creating a positive working environment; and, most importantly, (e) utilizing the dancer's own movement and incorporating it into the piece.

Journaling

Journaling, or the practice of keeping a diary, have been the primary ways researchers gain information regarding the dancer's thought process. What is different in a choreographer asking the dancer to journal is the hope for different emotions to be revealed, which a dancer can explore in the

rehearsal process. Choreographer 3 was very reliant on journaling for her own personal connection to the piece, and asked her dancer to also journal to get into the frame of mind and define a personal connection to the piece, saying, "I want him to really have the feeling 'cause that's where it started from, the inspiration started from that feeling (1st Interview with Choreographer 3, interviewed by author, Sept. 19, 2015)." Though Choreographer 3 never asked for the dancer to share what he journaled, the Choreographer believed that journaling was happening because of the discussions that would happen in rehearsals regarding choreography.

Providing Background Information

Choreographer 2 believes that in order for her dancers to feel committed they need to understand where the movement is coming from and understand her thought process in the creation. Choreographer 2 thinks that if a dancer doesn't completely understand what they are dancing about then they cannot relay the choreographer's intention, noting, "if a dancer doesn't know what the whole picture will be it's hard for them to dance in front of all their friends, we are all friends, we are not criticizing each other, but I understand it might be difficult for them (2nd Interview with Choreographer 2, Interview by author, Dec. 4, 2015)."

Discussions

When creating her work, "Action Conversations," Victoria Marks utilized discussion to create a relationship between the participants and herself as well as discerning what they need to receive from this process (Marks, 2014). Like Marks, Choreographer 1 relied heavily on the discussions that occurred after the rehearsal movement sessions to determine what they felt and what direction the piece is taking. When utilizing discussion consistently, dancers are more comfortable sharing their insights and ideas.

Choreographer 4 also facilitated discussion among dancers, but very inconsistently and usually one-sided. The conversations in the beginning felt more like lectures, but towards the end

dancers were more confident in sharing personal discoveries that occurred in the piece, only if Choreographer 4 welcomed this discussion.

Establishing a Positive Environment

Creating a positive environment is the responsibility of the choreographer; it was the main focus in David Dorfman's choreographic process (Parish, 2009). Though creating a positive working environment isn't something that all choreographers might consciously create, a trusting environment is something that both Choreographer 1 and 2 eventually came to realize through the process. A positive environment led them to discover similar outcomes to Dorfman's, such as dedication and honesty.

In order to get to a place where Choreographer 1 and her dancers were really experiencing the movement exercises, a safe environment had to be created. Choreographer 1 found that creating a positive environment occurs when thinking and speaking positively; it also motivates and energizes the group. In Choreographer 1's case, different points of view from the dancers enriched the initial intent of the piece. Choreographer 1 began with an intent to study anger and what this emotion can physically do to the body. What was quickly discovered was that anger is not the same to everyone, "It was really interesting because, for me, it was really clear what that physicality would be somehow, and then sharing these ideas with the others and seeing it evolve into different ways was really nice actually (Interview with Choreographer 1.2, interviewed by author, Dec. 15, 2015).

When creating this environment, these choreographers are open and flexible to their dancer's questions, needs, and suggestions. By constantly being receptive to dancer's feelings and uncertainties Choreographer 2 stated, "I feel that I can finally create a safe space for everyone to create and experience (Interview with Choreographer 2.2, interviewed by author, Dec. 4, 2015)." When trying to create something new and working with new people, every participant's feelings are important. Choreographer 4 ended the first rehearsal with a sharing circle where everyone shared one

of their insecurities. At the end of this meeting, dancers believed that they understood one another better and that their choreographer would be receptive to their feelings and needs. However, this sensitivity Choreographer 4 created at the close of the cast's first meeting did not translate into the remaining rehearsals.

Utilizing a dancer's own movement in choreography

This method of creation is different than what most young dancers are used to, where the choreographer comes in and sets movement and the dancer tries to copy it exactly, but it can give the most reward to the dancers and choreographer. Douglas Risner writes that when dancers take part in movement creation it, "allows them to participate in the making of the dance and to invest themselves more completely in the process (1992, p. 62)." Choreographers 1 and 4 utilized their own dancers' choreography in their pieces to allow for more of an ownership between the dancers and the pieces. Utilizing a dancer's movement in choreography is something that Choreographer 2 wished occurred more during the short workshopping period at the start of the process. Choreographer 2's piece is based on the dancer's characterization of emotions, to convey the piece's message properly she needed the dancers to be committed to the process. Everyone has a unique way of moving. Working with a choreographer, dancers try to mimic the choreographer's way of moving to create uniformity. However, because of the specific emotions Choreographer 2's piece requires, she did not want uniformity. By utilizing a dancer's own specific way of movement, the dancer can personally explore the emotional tasks and become more committed to the piece.

Dancer's Commitment

A dancer's definition of commitment is to give everything he or she has - more than just technical abilities - to make a piece a success. A study conducted on dance students utilized the

theory of basic needs to gauge what specific needs were most important to positive psychological health. Researchers analyzed their findings in three basic need theory categories; autonomy, competence, and belongingness (Quested et al., 2013). In my research I have also discovered the need for autonomy, more specifically defined as, (a) a trusting and supportive choreographer/dancer relationship which directly affects a dancer's competency. The need of competence can be translated as, (b) a feeling of ownership, and a combination of a dancer's feeling of ownership and the support and trust from their choreographer can facilitate. Lastly, the need of belonging has been defined in this study as (c) an emotional connection to the piece. The structure of the Dancer's Commitment section begins with a definition of each category of dancer's needs followed with analysis of each choreographer's method based off of dancer interviews. This structure allows a closer look at the individual points of views dancers have regarding their choreographer and the creative process. The segmentation of the four choreographers' processes will continue throughout the rest of the Findings section.

Support and trust

Dancers come in with a small amount of trust and an understanding of their expectations, as well as the expectations for the choreographer. If the choreographer is unhelpful, not clear, or unfairly harsh, trust is diminished. Building a deeper trust for the choreographer is a gradual process, something that can be created through choreographer support and positive work environment.

Choreographer 1

Trust was the major deciding point in choosing Choreographer 1's dancers, and was the main reason why her dancers were fully committed. Her dancers trusted her, and felt supported to dive into what she was asking them to discover. Putting herself through the process also helped to create trust

among herself and the dancers. Dancer 1 trusted her choreographer reflecting that by having everyone go through the process of exploration and creation was important in building a trusting relationship between each of them, and instilling a personal investment and commitment to the piece.

Choreographer 2

Choreographer 2's dancers unanimously said they feel supported during their rehearsals and leave always on a positive note. A supportive work environment attributed to the dancers' trust, as one noted:

> (Choreographer 2) has always this kind of really positive energy every time and in every rehearsal so you can never think, also if you are tired, you can never be tired with her because she is always giving you so much energy and so it's nice also times for example we are in rep class you can feel that teachers sometimes have really bad energy and it's not good for your work at all (Interview with Dancer 3, interviewed by author, Dec. 11, 2015)

The dancers feel that because Choreographer 2 is so supportive and working hard for the piece, that the least her they could do is work hard as well, "(Choreographer 2) is giving all herself for her choreography so for us it's the minimum to give our best for her and for her work. (Interview with Dancer 3, interviewed by author, Dec. 11, 2015)." Another dancer responded similarly, "I wanna do better for her because she is so positive, but says it how it is too. Cause when you beat around the bush, I don't know what I'm doing wrong, you know I can't see myself (Interview with Dancer 5, interviewed by author. Dec. 23, 2015)." Dancers who feel supported by their choreographers want to work hard to please them, creating a commitment in dancers and a positive, productive work environment.

Though the dancers had no idea of how the sections of choreography correlate to the piece's intention, however, they trust him/her, "I think regardless of whether or not his/her dancers know what's going on, she's one of those people that have crafted every angle of the piece so even if we have no idea of what's going on, I think it will end up reading (Interview with Dancer 4, interviewed by author. Oct. 15, 2015)." These dancers trust their choreographer to present a clear, well-crafted

piece, and because of his/her direct communication with them, they trust her to make it what she wants. The dancers believe that their role in the piece is to do what the choreographer wants, regardless of whether or not they understand how the piece works.

However, with more direction their choreographer provides, the less some dancers took initiative in creating their own understanding. There is a fine line between directing and over choreographing, the more a choreographer plans every part of the piece makes it difficult for a dancer to place their personal experiences into the movement. The dancers were more focused on completing the desired movement, instead of creating a personal relationship to the piece. Trust in a choreographer is important in creation, however, in this case it caused the dancers to become overly reliant on their choreographer and the choreography; which impacted Choreographer 2's impression of the piece's success or lack of success and the audience's understanding of the piece.

Choreographer 3

Choreographer 3's dancer admitted that trust was an issue for him in this process. He didn't believe that her style was being considered in the creation of the piece, and disagreed with choreographic choices, "I sometimes feel that the things she is doing are very, very, superficial and I really have to start asking, 'okay, why are you doing this kind of movement right here? Or is it because you felt like it? Or what has it to do with the theme or intention of the piece? (Interview with Dancer 8.1, interviewed by author, Oct. 7, 2015).' " The dancer was questioning the choice of highly technical movement to convey a universal human experience. The elements all came together to create a successful piece, but the dancer felt that the experience was very odd. Though he was supported, he never felt that a firm bond of trust was established. The dancer admitted that he never felt like he actually learned anything more about his choreographer, which he considers strange since the piece was a solo and they spent a lot of time working one on one. The dancer supposed his aversion to the choreographer was the choreographer's personality that made it difficult for him to work freely and take on the responsibility of the piece, "I don't feel very comfortable around her.

Maybe that's the thing like I never felt really comfortable around her or in the rehearsals you know like it's not about the movement or something I think it's character or personality her 'aura' let's say, which is making me not feel comfortable (Interview with Dancer 8. 2, interviewed by author, Jan. 3, 2016)." The piece was well received, if asked he would perform the piece again, but he would not like to work with this choreographer in a creation process again but would perform this piece again if asked.

Choreographer 4

Choreographer 4's dancers did not feel fully supported, due to his harsh way of speaking towards us. The dancers trusted him to create and shape the piece, as well as provide guidance to execute the proper movement style. However, because some dancers did not feel like they were adequately supported, they did not trust him and were turned away from the process. The harsh words and lack of support created a split in between the cast and choreographer did not help to create a positive work environment.

Ownership

Ownership of the piece allows the dancer to share in the success or failure of the piece. It invites them to put a bit of themselves in the piece through choreography or personal interpretation of the intention. The choreographers went through the same process as traditional dance companies; choreographer begins with an idea, then choose dancers, and add technical elements. However, unlike Barbour's belief of the choreographer being the sole creator utilizing their dancers as tools, the choreographers studied want their dancers to share a sense of accomplishment and ownership (2008).

Choreographer 1

Choreographer 1's intention regarding the ownership of the piece was that it should be shared among herself and her dancers. She admits that she could have been clearer in the beginning about collaborative roles, but is happy with commitment this process created in her dancers. Her dancers who have been through similar processes before, prefer this method of creating really feeling like they can shape what the piece means, "This is the piece where I actually like have opinions and bring my own experience and references a lot, whereas in the other pieces I'm trying to interpret what the choreographer is saying and here it is much more collaborating (Interview with Dancer 2, interviewed by author, Oct. 14, 2015)." By creating the piece together, they can focus more on the intent instead of performing the correct steps with the right qualities. This creation invites the dancers to put themselves in it as well as create a meaning for the piece and establish their role,

> I think it really feels like we are doing it together. It's like something like something we create together. Or like (Choreographer 1) invited us to "aah let's make a dinner" and you know like "we're gonna make a stew. what do you think we should add?" "maybe a bit more like cause I wanted it to be a bit like this" "Ahh but no! I think this fits," you know like how do we, like she has the structure and the plan and the beginning but then it's like we make it together (Interview with Dancer 2, interviewed by author, Oct. 14, 2015).

Dancers in Choreographer 1's piece believe that their input is valuable to the success of the piece. The process of creating together allows dancer to put their own ideas into the creation of the piece, allowing them to have a personal claim in the piece.

Choreographer 2

The only material Choreographer 2 had her dancers create were gestures, the rest of the material was created on her own. Her dancers were not used in the creation of material, "I think she works very independent of her dancers, whereas you can play with your dancers and come in and mess around and she'll take our input, but she's not asking (Interview with Dancer 4, interviewed by author, Oct. 24, 2015)." Though Choreographer 2 is receptive of input, her dancers are not willing to give suggestions, because she has not verbally asked. The dancers believe the movement is still very

much Choreographer 2's and not their own, making it hard to pick up and attribute meaning towards. The movement is fast, sharp, and hard to do with the correct music, therefore, much of the rehearsal was devoted to timing and sequencing than movement creation. The piece is very structured, and all of the dancers know their role. However, they are unsure of how Choreographer 2 wants the piece to be received, which affects their interpretation of the movement. Whether or not the piece is humorous or serious is unclear,

> I wonder if she wants it to come out funny or if it's just happening? Like we are laughing so much all the time cause the movement really looks funny or because it's so sharp and so and on this music we have a laugh every now and then and we think people will laugh, but we're not sure if she actually wants it. (Interview with Dancer 6, interviewed by author, Oct. 8, 2015)

One dancer has discovered how to take direction and make the movement his (or hers), noting, "The piece is reliant on the dancer's interpretation of emotional characters, so within that layer there is room for dancers to discover their own voice (Interview with Dancer 5, interviewed by author, Dec. 23, 2015)." Though there is not much of the dancer's own choreography, freedom and ownership can be found in the movement, allowing dancers to explore the motives behind their characters.

Choreographer 3

Choreographer 3's dancer felt that it was difficult for his choreographer to allow him to take ownership of the piece. Only during show run-throughs when the dancer got to run the piece by himself repeatedly did he finally establish ownership. Receiving more productive feedback by an outside eye, helped the dancer establish his own story and drive behind the material. The dancer believed that Choreographer 3 had a hard time trusting him with the piece, still giving him comments before going on stage for dress rehearsal,

> I think that that's about her character, but there were some points where she tried to like say little things, and I understand it, but you can really see that it's hard for her to let go. Of course you can say it and as a choreographer, you have to say it and you can work on details and stuff, but how you say it you know if the choreographer is totally safe about it and it's not like a correction because you're scared and more a correction of like, 'okay this you can do so it will be better' (Interview with Dancer 8.2, interviewed by author, Jan. 3, 2016)

The dancer felt Choreographer 3's insecurities about the piece, through the constant quick conversations and corrections Choreographer 3 would give in passing. Though the choreographer believes that piece was shared from an early point in the process, the dancer had a feeling that this piece was more for her and less for him. This realization forced the dancer to fight for his voice to be heard in the piece, which happened late in the creative process, five days before the show.

Choreographer 4

On the first rehearsal Choreographer 4 had mentioned that he intended for the piece to be collaborative, creating movement from the dancers instead of purely setting material. He wanted this piece to reflect the dancer's selves and explore universal human interactions. The dancers did create some material for specific sections, but many of the material was drastically altered to better fit the 'vibe' or style of the piece. Because of the lack of support and trust, the dancer- created movement wasn't true to themselves. The movement created was movement that they believed Choreographer 4 would like, not giving the dancers a feeling of true ownership. Choreographer 4 would hold private meetings with his dancers, where they would show him the material they created based on his prompt. One dancer purposefully did not put much effort into creating choreographer, the reasoning being that the choreographer will just change it to what he wants anyway. Other dancers admitted that their phrases were changed also, but much of the changes dealt with repeating a portion of the material, changing tempos, or incorporating existing choreography into the dancer's phrase.

Emotional Connection

An emotional connection is a mind body relationship that occurs when dancers are allowed to attribute movement to the creative process (Risner, 1992). Risner states that being centered is, "not just an activity of the mind but of the whole self in time and space. The engagement of the whole self, as an embodied person, is necessary to make meaning of our lives in the world (1992, p.2)." An emotional connection can arise from fully understanding the intent of the piece and creating a

personal experience within the frame of intention and movement. An emotional connection to the piece is one that a dancer must make on his or her own. It is rare. Choreographers utilize tools to create ownership, but are ultimately wanting their dancers to feel an emotional connection with the piece.

Choreographer 1

The dancers have a huge emotional connection to the piece, due to the fact that they created together the meaning and material for the piece. They also discovered unique personal experiences while completing the same tasks, "When I scream (silent scream is the opening movement) and the audience looks at me, and I scream because there is a giant fire behind them, and I used to see the fire, the flames, I used to go to different places (Interview with Dancer 1, interviewed by author, Dec. 30, 2015)." But in order for the choreographer to produce the type of performative work she desired, she needed to have her dancer's trust first. Choreographer 1's dancers understood this from the start and gave their whole being, "In this piece you either go full way or, I don't know, it cannot be either or (Interview with Dancer 1, interviewed by author, Dec. 30, 2015)." Though there was no athletic movement, the dancers worked themselves into a heightened state that left them breathless, fatigued, and disoriented at the end of the three- minute piece. From this state of exhaustion, the dancers believe they fulfilled their choreographer's vision and took the audience on a journey. The dancers still very connected to this process, even after the show, and believe, like their choreographer, that this is only the beginning for the piece. They plan to continue to explore and expand the piece and perform it in unconventional performance locations.

Choreographer 2

Though Choreographer 2's piece was centered around the dancer's interpretation of specific emotional characters, they were more acting instead of actively experiencing that emotion. The lack of personal emotional exploration did not create a strong emotional connection between dancers and

piece. However, because of the supportive environment Choreographer 2 created an emotional connection from her dancers was established on her.

> So I'm gonna be sad for that to be over, cause she's kinda like our mamma bear you know? Like we can do this!! Like our little cheerleader and I'm gonna miss that, and I'm excited, I just want to do it well for her and her to be happy. Cause I feel like this is her baby you know? She spent so much time and thought and effort into this that as long as she's happy I'm happy (Interview with Dancer 5, interviewed by author, Dec. 23, 2015).

Though they didn't connect with the unnatural movement, Choreographer 2's dancers enjoyed working with her. The dancers were more focused on performing to please Choreographer 2, not on developing an emotional response as an individual.

Choreographer 3

The most important thing for Choreographer 3's dancer is the need to feel an emotional connection with the pieces he dances. Without an emotional connection this dancer does not believe that he will be successful. Which at the start he did not believe that he would be able to create an emotional connection to the choreography due to his choreographer's personality, however, he was up for the challenge to explore and perform a new character. It was only through consistent runs of the piece during the final weeks before the performance that he not only established ownership, but also created an emotional connection;

> As soon as it became mine when the choreographer gives it to the dancer, as soon as I could like literally slide into it and really perform it and be in it without like wasting too much time and energy to like really find a way to get in it, there one point it was very like satisfying to do it and also like very, I mean it became and in a way every time it was the same but in a way movement wise but it was all the time like a journey for me (Interview with Dancer 8.2, interviewed by author, Jan. 3, 2016).

Through establishing his own emotional connection, he fulfilled his choreographer's intent of showing a personal journey to the audience.

Choreographer 4

There was inconsistent support from Choreographer 4 to his dancers, and harsh words spoken to his dancers. Though his intent was to create a piece that was as much ours as his, and even though he put our movement in the choreography, there was not a strong sense of emotional connection among dancers. The piece was well received, and all the dancers agreed that there was a special bond between each of them established during the second performance. After the performance, Choreographer 4 did not match the cast's excited energy and seemed to distance himself from his cast. The only correspondence from the choreographer was regarding costume maintenance. This behavior made the dancers believe that their performance was not acceptable to their choreographer. Therefore, whatever emotional connection to the piece that could have been created was discarded, because of the choreographer's behavior towards the dancers.

2. Quality is the most important choreographic element in the creative process

Working on movement quality is the most important choreographic element in the creative process. Douglas Risner had grouped quality with timing, rhythm, dynamic, shape, and pattern as one entity in the movement investigation portion of the rehearsal process (1992). However, I have discovered that quality is an important element does occur during movement creation, but is intentionally added by the choreographer when the piece is set. According to choreographers, quality is a way for them to make sure that their dancers are communicating the correct information. The biggest reason why choreographers rely heavily on quality is to create a feeling of honesty. All choreographers studied believe that dancing should be an honest response to the events occurring on stage. By presenting honest work, choreographers believe that the audience will be able to connect with the emotions the dancers are projecting. These choreographers studied believe that what they are exploring are universal to the human experience.

Choreographer 1

One of the main purposes in Choreographer 1's movement research is to find honest responses and how that affects the body. "I have discovered like also as I said today, that I'm much more interested in people than movement and that I can actually get irritated even sometimes when it's like moving to move you know? Like putting all this extra thing."... and not "coming from an honest place. Yeah and this about honesty it's just resonating so much and I actually never thought about it so deeply, but since I came here it was really one of my main focuses... (Interview with Choreographer 1.2, interviewed by author, Dec. 15, 2015)." Choreographer 1 is focused on creating work from an honest source to share with the audience, believing that in order to do so, the dancers need to be honest in their movement responses. Rehearsals consisted of movement responses to prompts and discussion; time was spent understanding each dancer's specific choices and experiences during the exercise. Once the time came to mold and set the dance, the dancers were held accountable on the honesty of their movement. When doing a run, if the dancers did not feel like they were honest in their reactions, they would stop the run and try again.

Choreographer 2

As a dancer Choreographer 2 needs to have a reason behind each movement, so as a choreographer she expects her dancers to need to have reason behind their movements as well.

> Everyone has a different story to do, even the same thing, and I need to see and I want them to know why they move, why they do every single step, even walking. And if it's not clear to them to do it, then I think, maybe they don't have to and can just stand there… I think it comes more from their true self, not just like a machine. (Interview with Choreographer 2.2, interviewed by author, Dec. 4, 2015)

This choreographer spent an entire rehearsal on creating a movement story with her dancers; they walked through the entire piece while Choreographer 2 gave prompts to think about their own motives behind the movement. However, because there were difficulties with casting changes, and dancers on different levels of understanding the choreography, and issues with movement timing Choreographer 2 felt like she could not devote as much time to quality as she would have liked,

> I couldn't reach that point that we can work on the quality, so that's why I think 'okay, whatever', because the movement was not together then how could you work on the quality? The quality creates a whole picture itself, not just the movement or posture or poses, it's more about why you move this way, why this arm is now here, because there is a reason. (Interview with Choreographer 2.3, interviewed by author, Jan. 20, 2016).

Not devoting time to shape the piece qualitatively was one of the reasons Choreographer 2 said made her give up on really making her vision true. Without working on the quality of the piece Choreographer 2 did not believe that the piece was as successful as it could have been.

Choreographer 3

The most important thing for Choreographer 3 is that her dancer conveys and feels a similar emotion she felt when creating this piece. She conveys this emotion through movement with mechanical, controlled, sharp, and precise qualities. One of the things she wishes to communicate to the audience about the dance is the dancer's situation, who is going through a traumatic and uncomfortable process, and to do so she puts the dancer in awkward and uncomfortable position and has him tense his muscles until he shakes. "Keeping the intention as honest as possible and raw as possible and I want him to obviously find his own experience and enjoy it because, I mean I can't control whether or not he enjoys it, but it's important to me that he finds something personal to relate to (Interview with Choreographer 3.1, interviewed by author, Sept. 19, 2015)." Much of the structure is set, however, it is up to the dancer to add their own feelings to the qualitative direction in order to create honesty on stage and a more fulfilling experience for the dancer.

Choreographer 4

Choreographer 4 also wanted his movement to appear as an honest gut reaction, however, his dancers had to learn his specific language or what was commonly referred to as "the vibe" first. The vibe is what Choreographer 4 describes as his quality. The vibe quality created, for most of the dancers, a new stance of hunched shoulders and a forward pelvis. Choreographer 4 believes that this

way of moving was more primitive, human, and relaxed as opposed to more classical postures. The dance was smooth, even if there were accented movements, it never happened with hard attacks, but with short pops that softened into the next movement. One of Choreographer 4's beliefs is that once the dancers worked within this vibe for a long time, they would start to react to what was happening on stage while in the vibe, thus making the vibe the default response language. This never happened for some dancers; four months working in a new style for only a few hours a week was not enough to change some dancer's set movement patterns for an honest vibe response.

3. Choreographer's original inspiration is not the same as the audience's intent

From my survey responses, I learned that most choreographers care that the audience takes something away from the piece, but what they take away isn't necessarily the interpretation of the piece. Sixty-four percent of choreographers surveyed want to evoke some sort of emotion from the audience; however, half of choreographers are uncertain if they successfully said what they intended to say (Nitzotzot Creative Process Post Show Survey. Survey. Created January 5, 2016). In the case of the four choreographers studied, they were more interested in exploring an idea or a state of being, therefore relying on the emotions that their dancers portray to set a mood for the audience. Instead of the concept, the choreographers were hoping for an emotional response from the audience to their pieces.

Choreographer 1

Choreographer 1's piece was a collaboration that researched what emotions can physically do to the human body. The choreographer also used this process to figure out what interests her when viewing dance and how to create that on stage. Due to the three-minute time limit, the performance showed only a fraction of the research she and her dancers actually explored.

Originally inspired by her own struggles with the emotion of anger, the piece expanded to include the exploration of different types of emotional triggers. Her goal was to make the audience feel what she and her dancers were feeling, these are some of the questions she would keep in mind during her rehearsals;

> Okay it's (anger) such a strong emotion it can do so much like how can you put it out and make someone else feel it, you know? and what does it do to your physicality? what kind of emotions or experiences or whatever do to dance, to performance. And I think we all have our lives, we all accumulate, we do we have associations with everything, we associate this with this with this it becomes like you know your own world it's how it works somehow you know, so, how can you play with this and yeah make other people come into your world? (Interview with Choreographer1.1, interviewed by author, Sept. 25, 2015)

The piece is not dancey in the traditional sense, it is very facial. The three dancers perform in a brightly lit spotlight on stage and stand as close to the audience as possible for their faces to be seen

clearly. Because it is so facial the choreographer believes that, regardless of nationality, the audience will relate and feel what the dancers are conveying on stage.

The dancers believe that their performance of the piece went well, "(we) took the audience with them somewhere, not sure where, but it was exciting (Interview with Dancer 1, interviewed by author, Dec. 30, 2015)." They discovered the different potentials the piece could have, and unlocked more of themselves as performers, "I enjoyed it, I had a great time, like I thought I discovered something and if you discover something on stage and you really like feel in it, I don't know, that's the best you can do (Interview with Choreographer 1.3, interviewed by author, Jan. 18, 2016)."

Choreographer 1 is unsure of how the piece was received, but was not asking for feedback; believing that if someone had something to say they would. Her dancers believe they accomplished their goal in creating a strong reaction from the audience to the piece. Believing that they left a lot of the audience questioning what they just saw, "You know, so about this you cannot really say a lot, I think, or either you get really irritated or really don't like it, it's not a piece that can be a happy middle ever (Interview with Dancer 1, interviewed by author, Dec. 30, 2015)." For Choreographer 1, she learned that someone not remembering is worse than someone not liking the piece, "like for me it's the worst when you don't remember and I think it's strong enough to remember, but I don't know (Interview with Choreographer 1.3, interviewed by author, Jan. 18, 2016)." The cast believes they achieved their goal in sharing what they researched, making the audience feel what they were experiencing, and finding a deeper level of performance in dance.

Choreographer 1 believes that there is a laziness or passivity when audience members are in a traditional theater setting, and that there needs to be an effort taken by the audience to receive and critically understand any piece.

> I like the whole different atmosphere, and I think like when people sitting in the theater, first of all they're in the dark, they're sitting, so they're very passive, and this is a state you're in, which makes it concentrated, which makes it very focused very like observant, which is great. I don't want interactive, like if it's not well done, I don't want it. But the different setting and to bring art in to different surroundings so the people realize it's not something exclusively for stage it's something like to show something like I don't know um art on the wall you

> know painting, it can be much more viewed as yeah, not so exclusive (Interview with Dancer 1.3, interviewed by author, Dec. 15, 2016.)

Choreographer 1 and her dancers all agree that the next step with this piece is to experiment with performance venues. Potential venues would be galleries, public spaces, and even bars, anywhere where the audience is not required to sit and be quiet. By taking dance out of the formal theater, Choreographer 1 hopes to make dance more available in everyday life. Choreographer 1 wants dance to be treated like visual art. Just like art work is not only found in galleries, theaters do not exclusively house dance performances, dance can occur everywhere.

Choreographer 2

Choreographer 2's inspiration was based on memories and the idea of different people may share a similar memory but may have completely different perspectives. To demonstrate these perspectives, she chose five dancers to personify different emotions and utilized an apple as the shared memory. A second part Choreographer 2 addresses is the need for people to be present, not living in the past or thinking too far ahead without enjoying where they are currently. For this layer, she split the stage into a graph making the center the present, y axis from back to front is dream to reality, and the x axis from left to right is future to past, with present in the center of the stage. However, she is not expecting the audience to understand these complex layers of her piece. In fact, she doesn't care if they understand her piece or not, she just wants them to have fun. "They could think it is about spaghetti and that is okay (Interview with Choreographer 2.1, interviewed by author, Sept. 23, 2015)." Choreographer 2's dancers also understand her position,

> From what I gather from her talking to us she's not overly concerned about that (audience not understanding). I think it's so much more theatrical than dancing, because of what she, I don't know, she was saying the other day of how she just wanted wants them to laugh or something and that's great like if she has accomplished her goal (Interview with Dancer 5, interviewed by author, Dec. 23, 2015).

Choreographer 2's dancers believe that her message will read because she crafted the dance so well and clear, "So I think because it's so, like she has controlled everything we do that it's gonna

read her intention, or whatever she wants the audience to get, I think it will read. Whether or not we know it because she didn't really leave much up to us (Interview with Dancer 4, interviewed by author, Oct. 15, 2015)." Choreographer 2 doesn't believe that dance has to be so serious in order to explore intellectual topics. She doesn't take herself so seriously either, which is why she played the role of a movement narrator in a Santa Claus suit,

> I just want to be more like a fun. I don't care if the audience will get, but we treat a little bit of a sensitive part like a personal thing in the piece, I want to be more like a playful I don't want always serious and cry and 'oh life is hard,' no no no. I just thought it's funny (Interview with Choreographer 2.2, interviewed by author, Jan. 20, 2016).

Though this was a fun hearted choice, the decision was not taken lightly. Choreographer 2 wanted originally to be a clown, however, decided it would be easier to find a Santa costume, but playing a beloved holiday icon made her cautious of potentially disrespecting a culture.

The feedback she received was primarily from peers in the program, saying how fun her piece looked. Feedback was superficial, but Choreographer 2 did not press for more in depth feedback or go out of the way to seek audience opinions.

Choreographer 3

Choreographer 3 is usually inspired by the feeling specific music evokes, this process was no different. She first heard a song in a dance class and enjoyed the feeling the music and movement created, that she wanted to recreate this in a new piece. Looking up the lyrics of the song- which tells the story of a man who drunkenly raped his girlfriend while she was sleeping and is now trying to pick up the fallen pieces of his life- influenced the quality of the movement material and mood of the piece. Through the choreographic process Choreographer 3 has come to interpret the piece as an unquenchable desire or thirst, the dancer being the one who decides what exactly is that thirst, "it's this hunger, desire, it's like, more than just one thing, you know it could be for so many different things, but it depends on who's performing it (Interview with Choreographer 3.2, interviewed by author, Dec. 4, 2015)." Because the feeling of desire is something all humans can identify with she

believes that audience members will pull from their own experiences to explain the desire. Choreographer 3 believes that,

> because of the universality of the topic and subject of this dance, it can be applied to so many different context and you can talk about gender, you can talk about society, problems we have, you can talk about mental illness, you know people having goals and issues (Interview with Choreographer 3.3, interviewed by author, Jan. 27, 2015).

The piece was well received, even her dancer is pleased at how everything came together perfectly. Choreographer 3 enjoys hearing different interpretations of her piece and believes that the dancer's personal journey will be interesting to an audience. However, when talking with audience members and friends after the show she didn't hear an explanation of her piece that fully captured what she was going for, but she still believes that people can identify with the piece even though they can't identify her inspiration.

Choreographer 4

Choreographer 4 was inspired by the polarity of emotions we feel at the same time towards one person. He wrote poems that were used to create the four sections of the piece and were also incorporated into the sound score. There was a lot of emphasis placed on dancers to 'be human', to constantly be aware and connected with each other, and discover new things in the choreography. The choreography was very detailed oriented; many rehearsals were spent just going over three counts of eight.

He never told his dancers what he wanted the audience to get out of the piece, and was a bit negative in the audience's part in the process. He adamantly said he did not care what the audience thought of his piece. Choreographer 4's goal was to get the dancers to move as a unit, a cohesive group, but still preserve their own individuality; if this was accomplished this then the piece would be a success. Choreographer 4 wanted to present a community with realistic movement, not overly athletically technical.

RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS IN THE ART WORLD

The findings of this research have discovered the similarities and differences in a choreographer's approach to choreography and working with dancers. All choreographers studied want their dancers to become emotionally invested in the work, to have their own interpretation of what the vision means to them, and to let these emotions influence the movement. There were many different ways that the choreographers studied tried to create an emotional connection in their dancers to the piece. There is a balance that the choreographer must negotiate between being overly controlling and facilitating, because this sets the environment for how the work will be created, what role the dancers play in the creation, and how they interpret the choreographer's vision. The choreographer's message to the audience is the dancer's responsibility, which is why choreographers require so much from their dancers.

These findings can be applied to the professional dance company in further understanding ways to engage audiences. First, there is a reason why a specific dancer is chosen which has to do with what the choreographer wants to communicate to the audience. Second, understanding how the dancers feel during a performance can help a choreographer determine if the audience received the proper message. Lastly, dancers need to understand that they play a large part in audience engagement as an essential link between a choreographer's intent and an audience's understanding.

Dancers are not replaceable

As a dancer I have often been told that dancers are a dime a dozen, are easily replaceable, and there will always be another dancer that wants your spot. While it may be slightly true that dancers are selected based on costume requirements, that is not always the real reason in concert dance on how choreographers select dancers. 37.5% of choreographers surveyed in the Post- Nitzotzot survey responded that their dancers were most important in providing feedback about the piece, 50%

responded that their peers, those with similar dance training though not dancing in the piece, were also important in providing feedback (Nitzotzot Creative Process Post Show Survey. Survey. Created January 5, 2016).

These findings demonstrate the importance that a dancer's perspective can have over the audience's understanding the piece. The choreographer does think about the audience's experience, but indirectly. Choreographers rely on dancers to adequately get the intended feeling across to the audience. In order to make sure the right feeling is presented, choreographers need their dancers to understand the choreographic inspiration. Through understanding the choreographer's inspiration, the dancers then put their own interpretation on the material reshaping it to fit their personalities creating a personal and emotional connection. Choreographers guide their dancers to utilize different movement qualities to represent different feelings or ideas the piece needs to present. Without proper use of quality, an audience might not understand if the dancers are in love or in conflict. Though, it is up to the choreographer to make decisions about the piece that will allow the audience to understand what the piece conveys, the responsibility is the dancer's. Regardless of all the prompts and corrections a choreographer can give, it is the dancer that is responsible for the communication of the choreographer to the audience.

An engaged dancer is desired to fully communicate the choreographer's message, but an engaged dancer is also proud in the work they are performing. A dancer has a wide range of potential audience connections that can help bring in new audiences. The more passionate a dancer is about the work, the easier it is for them to talk about the work and convince people to come to the performance. Artist lack of interest is a huge barrier to obtaining new audiences. In the Dance USA's Current Engagement Practices Survey, 45% of Administers responded that it is difficult to engage artists to bring their own support and that they just want to perform the piece and leave, which does nothing to engage audiences (Brown and Novak, 2009).

By utilizing the studied choreographer's techniques and choices we can see the affects they had on the dancer's perceptions of the piece as well as the choreographer themselves. A positive

choreographic creative process starts with all participants having trust, honest communications, a commitment to what is being created, and sharing a part of one's self with the piece. Whereas, an unfulfilling choreographic creative process leaves the dancers unsatisfied in their relationship and role with the piece. An unfulfilling choreographic creative process leaves a choreographer unsure if their intended communication was received by an audience and leaves the dance unenthused. No matter the intentions of the choreographer or their desire for their dancers to relate and commit to the piece, it is the dancer's responsibility to research beyond the choreography on their relationship to the piece and how they can engage an audience.

Gauging if the piece is a success

Once the piece is performed, then the real work on shaping can begin. By showing a new work in front of an audience, a choreographer can see and even sometimes hear the reaction their piece receives. Some performance venues or choreographers include a short post- show survey to get new perspectives and to figure out what worked and what did not.

The choreographers studied believed their piece was well received because of their dancer's performance. However, these choreographers did not have deep discussions with audience members or peers about their piece. Having formal audience feedback at these shows would have been difficult. Each show consisted of 13 pieces, making the shows almost 2 hours which to even an avid audience member can cause fatigue. Another problem is the lack of a uniform language, not everyone spoke English and if they did may have not understood English well enough to ask or answer questions. Unable to receive formal audience feedback choreographers gauged their piece's reception based on the feedback their dancers provided. Many times a dancer's feedback is based on the physical execution of the piece that can be addressed in the studio; timing problems, awkward transitions, spacing difficulties, etc. Dancers surveyed post show did not give feedback based on whether or not the audience understood the choreographer's intent.

By involving the audience in this discussion the choreographer is saying they value an audience's suggestion and perspective. Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process was created in response to the lack of quality feedback from audiences. Lerman understands that choreographers are insecure when people give opinions about their work, but she learned that by being honest about the piece and asking specific questions made her more willing to hear audience feedback.

> I found that if I could just talk about the messes that are an inevitable part of creating new work- talk out loud and listen to myself- I would hear an unexpected way out of an artistic dilemma and new information that could help me make the piece stronger, such as a unifying metaphor or a new idea about structure (Lerman and Borstel, 2003, p. 7).

Feedback is beneficial to the choreographer by also in creating audience engagement. By asking for feedback the audience is more receptive in viewing the piece, causing engagement and reflection on what they just viewed. Much like reading comprehension classes where students answer questions after reading a paragraph, dance is better comprehended when questions are posed to the audience. An audience member usually will only give feedback when they have an emotional response to a work, these emotional responses might not be very helpful in providing useful feedback to the choreographer. In the Critical Response Process, audience members are invited to give their opinions at the last step in the process, which causes emotional energy to diminish and allows for more thought out suggestions or opinions on why the audience member liked or disliked the piece (Lerman and Bortstel, 2003). Utilizers of this method of collecting feedback find that the audience's responses and questions are more thoughtful and helpful in the piece's process. This process of feedback collecting requires both the choreographer and the artists to talk about the work and the needs of the work, not targeting the choreographer. By discussing the choreographer's questions and difficulties of the piece the audience becomes engaged and is a part of the creative process.

Of the 8 choreographers who took the second survey half of them responded that they felt like they were successful in what they wanted to say and the other half responded they were unsure, however no one selected that they were unsuccessful in communicating something to the audience (Nitzotzot Creative Process Post Show Survey. Survey. Created January 5, 2016). The discovery of

the importance of feedback informs the answer for my question- if a piece is created for a choreographer's ego verses to communicate something to the audience. The information each party gives one another creates deeper understanding for the piece. However, the choreographer must explore the audience feedback, otherwise there is no point for feedback and the piece is created for the benefit of the choreographer, not to communicate with the audience. With this relationship and open dialogue, the choreographer can determine whether or not their intended message is being understood by the audience. From the survey results, feedback from a peers, dancers, and curator where the biggest influences for a choreographer, whereas no one selected audience as a beneficial feedback provider (Wolfbrown, 2011).

A Catch-22 of Sorts.

As stated previously from the WolfBrown study, "How to Engage Dance Audiences," the biggest issue the whole dance world is facing is the lack of a sustainable audience (2011). Fifty-seven percent of the dance audience is made up of people with some degree of dance training (WolfBrown, 2011). Non-dancer friends of mine have frequently confided in me that the reason they do not attend dance concerts is because they do not understand dance and that whatever meaning the piece is trying to convey goes over their heads. Potential dance audiences want to know the correct meaning of the piece. However, from the interviews with the choreographers, choreographers believe there are no right or wrong meanings when watching postmodern dance (Interviews with Choreographers 1, 2, 3).

Of the 14 choreographers surveyed, 64% wanted the audience to feel emotion, whereas 21% just wanted them to feel something (Nitzotzot Creative Process. Survey. Created September 27, 2015). Choreographers do not care that their specific and detailed story is not understood by the audience, they want their audience to empathize with their dancers and to have an honest emotionally reaction to what is being explored. Choreographer 3 adamantly believes that it does not matter whether the audience understands the story, just as long as they discern their own meaning.

This way of approaching choreography continues to further define the postmodern dance genre, which is process-oriented rather than performance-oriented (Nadel and Strauss, 2003). Which can be difficult for audiences who are looking for a linear story line, to just watch an exploration of a topic. Sometimes choreographers give context clues in program notes and titles that help the audience think in a particular mindset when figuring out their own meaning. From discussions with choreographers, they want their pieces to be a point of discussion that welcome different opinions and suggestions, and therefore do not like to disclose too much information in fear of swaying the audience's perceptions (Interview with Choreographers 1, 3).

Contrary to what choreographers think, 83% of producers and administrative directors of dance organizations surveyed believe that audiences benefit from explanations of art (Brown and Novak, 2009). Administrators of larger-budgeted dance companies produce programing that leads up to performances which goes in depth with dancer interviews, choreographer interviews, video snippets of rehearsals, open rehearsal days, and even movement classes, all with the goal for audiences to become familiar with the work to be performed (Brown and Novak, 2009). However, only engaged audiences familiar with the company are most likely to partake in these programs (Brown and Novak, 2009). In fact, engagement activities are not designed to invite new audiences, but to deepen the relationship of current audiences and heighten their artistic experience (Brown and Novak, 2009).

In light of the proposed research question of choreographers' intentions towards audience engagement and given the findings of the research gathered and conducted, it seems that choreographers do want a connection between the audience and the dance. The choreographer wants the audience to establish the meaning of this connection, but the audience is reliant on prompts from the choreographer to correctly understand the meaning of the dance piece, leaving this relationship undefined and both parties unfulfilled. In order to meet the audience's supposed needs the administrative staff create programs that provide additional information to help audiences arrive at the

'right' meaning. However, the choreographers want 'right' meaning to be discovered by the audience.

Administrators are the middle men between audiences and choreographers, and dancers are removed from the conversation entirely. Dancers are important and need to realize their place is not just fulfilling the vision of the choreographer, but also in establishing a connection with the audience, a connection that administrators want to continue and build upon after the performance. In the 2009 Survey of Current Audience Engagement Practices, 45% of producers said that artists' lack of time and commitment to audience engagement activities is a huge obstacle: "Artists, in my observation, just want to show up, do their piece, and leave. That is not how it works in my experience" (p. 24). Dancers are unaware of their importance in creating audience engagement, and are reluctant when they are expected to stay after performances.

A suggestion for this miscommunication is to have open communication between choreographer, dancers, and administrators on what this art derived from and what the choreographer wants the audience to receive from this piece. Dancers must be on board with audience engagement activities and be more conscious about the audience's reaction while performing. I also believe that choreographers should have a voice in the creation and implementation of audience engagement activities. By being more active in building and engaging the audience, the choreographers and their dancers should be compensated for the implementation of engagement practices. Paying choreographers and dancers for only rehearsals and performances, makes them believe that they are not a part of creating engagement and are just valued for performances. Administrators want choreographers and dancers to be more committed to audience engagement, the best way is to make that part of their contract and provide compensation.

SUGGESTIONS IN CONTINUING THIS RESEARCH

These findings are just preliminary and specific to the Dance Journey 2015 August to January program. The study helped me make a small connection between the choreographic creative process and engagement. The next step would be to try and replicate the study to see if there are similarities in a new setting with other choreographers in a similar creation process.

In addition to replication, it would be helpful to also study advanced choreographers and compare them to the findings from young and emerging choreographers of this study. Advanced choreographers, currently defined as choreographers who do not create based on assignment but on their own motivation, who produce at least one new work a year, have had multiple performances of a work, and can compensate their dancers. In this study focal points would be on the choreographer/ dancer relationship, dancers' perceptions of their role, and the role compensation plays in the creative process.

To further understand the relationship between the audience and the dancers, effort should be put into an in depth survey study. Since choreographers believe their audiences will have an emotional reaction to the dancer's performance, dancers should be studied to see what they feel and what they believe they are emoting and audiences should be studied to see what emotions were triggered while watching the performance. This kind of study can go extremely in-depth to pinpoint the most important sections of a piece for an audience's emotional understanding, as well as going deeper into the thought processes of dancers, making a dancer more conscious of the effects their actions and interpretations play in performing. The choreographers will then take this information and work with their dancers to develop the piece to better communicate the intended emotion.

In looking at a bigger picture of dance audience engagement for dance performances I wonder what the real reasons are why people do not attend dance performances. I would like to look at people with no prior dance knowledge or experience and have them attend a variety of dance performances and study their experiences. For this type of inquiry, it may be useful to establish a control group that has no additional information such as choreographer notes, summary, or background information, while an experimental group would be provided with background information or summaries and be asked to think about different questions while watching the dance. The purpose of this study would be to determine whether an aversion to dance is because of lack of interest or knowledge of dance. I would also look at the audience's ability to create meaning for themselves in viewing the performance by looking at the role background information and program notes play in the audience's perception of the piece.

I believe that dance is made for a reason and that dance is meant to be shared. Currently, the relationship between the creator and the audience is weak. Both sides want the same thing: to provide/ have a meaningful experience. By continuing this study with these new facets and through information from the Engaging Dance Audiences study from Dance/USA we can figure out how best to make meaningful experiences for all audience members throughout the choreographic process.

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